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Interregional Contacts in the Biqāʿa Valley from a Beetle's Point of View: Egyptian and Egyptianising Scarabs at Bronze Age Kāmid al-Lōz (Kumidi)

Abstract

The ancient city of Kumidi (present-day Kāmid al-Lōz) was one of the major centres in the Lebanese Biqāʿa Valley during the MB and LB.[1] The German excavations have yielded a number of foreign goods, reflecting the town's position on the crossroads of important routes between the Lebanese coast, inner Syria and northern Palestine. This contribution focuses on Egyptian imports and egyptianising artefacts, particularly on glyptic evidence. It seeks to reconstruct their distribution pattern within the city through a re-assessment of the objects and their archaeological contexts, offering new insights into the interregional and intraregional relations by which these imports arrived at Kāmid al-Lōz.

Keywords: Lebanon, Bronze Age, Egyptian-Levantine relations, *aegyptiaca*, scarabs, seals

Introduction

Located in the southern part of the fertile Biqāʿa Valley, Kāmid al-Lōz (ancient Kumidi) found itself on the crossroads of important routes between northern Palestine, the Mediterranean, the Damascene Basin and the Syrian coast (Fig. 1). From the south, a route followed the Hasbani River between the Lebanon and Hermon mountain ranges, coming from Tel Dan and connecting the Biqāʿa Valley with southern Lebanon (Tyre) and northern Palestine (Hazor). North of Kāmid al-Lōz, it continued through the valley and

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[1] MB = Middle Bronze Age; LB = Late Bronze Age. All dates are considered BC. Bibliographical abbreviations are given according to the guidelines of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, see URL: http://www.dainst.org/medien/de/richtlinien_abkuerzungen.html; additional abbreviations are according to the series Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (OBO) cited in the bibliography.

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north of Baʿalbek followed the Orontes towards Homs and into western Syria. An eastern route, following the Barada River between the Hermon and the Antilebanon Mountains, connected the Biqāʿa with the Damascene Basin. The south-western end of the valley, through the Jazzin-Mashgara Pass, provided a connection to Sidon, but there were more routes running over the Lebanon mountains and reaching the Lebanese coast (Beirut, Byblos) (Hachmann 1989: Fig. 1).

The archaeological finds on the tell bear witness to this opportune position, which contributed significantly to the development of the city and its role in intraregional and interregional trade. Most of the finds were retrieved during controlled excavations, in a series of campaigns that started in 1963 under the direction of R. Hachmann (Saarland University, Saarbrücken) and A. Kuschke (Johannes-Gutenberg-University, Mainz) and continued from 1965 to 1981 under the leadership of Hachmann. Work concentrated mainly on the Late Bronze Age acropolis (Hachmann 1989; Lehmann 2002: 297–300). During the Lebanese Civil War (1975–1990), the site was subject to clandestine excavations, and cuneiform tablets from the archives of Kumidi started to surface on the antiquities market (Lilyquist 1994). Since 1997, an archaeological mission led by M. Heinz (Albert-Ludwigs-University, Freiburg) has resumed the German excavations and has revealed more Bronze and Iron Age remains (Fig. 2).[2]

The material retrieved from the palace and the temple comprises a diversified group of imported objects that circulated in the city, such as Egyptian, Minoan, Mycenaean and Cypriot artefacts. This contribution presents a concise overview of Egyptian and Egyptian-style objects, particularly scarabs, and evaluates their presence on the site with regard to Egyptian-Levantine relations during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages.[3]

Catalogue (Figs. 3–6)

Kāmid al-Lōz has yielded a relatively large number of Middle and Late Bronze Age scarabs[4] and impressions made by scarab-shaped seals.[5] Only the finds from Middle and Late Bronze Age contexts will be considered here; 'heirlooms' in Iron Age contexts could have arrived at a later date and therefore do not necessarily reflect Egyptian-Levantine

[2] For annual excavation reports and bibliography: Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Fachbereich Vorderasiatische Archäologie, *Die Grabungskampagnen in Kamid el-Loz*, see: URL: http://www.vorderasien.uni-freiburg.de/index.php/forschung/grabungen (last accessed 26/06/2013).

[3] Kühne / Salje (1996: 163–164, Karte 2–9) presented an assessment of all glyptic evidence from the site, without however, distinguishing 'heirlooms' from items that are contemporaneous with their archaeological contexts, which is important when discussing Egyptian-Levantine relations in a given period.

[4] The excavations also yielded Bronze Age stamp seals with non-Egyptian designs that will not be discussed here: e.g. Kühne / Salje 1996: 119, no. 65 (on the omega-design on MB II glyptic, see Keel 1994: 208–209), nos. 49 and 78 (on these designs on the LB II animal-plaques, see Keel 1994: 226–230).

[5] It is extremely rare that impressions of both the base and the back of a seal-amulet (e.g. Cat. no. 8) are found, so impressions can only be attributed to scarab-shaped seals on the basis of a combination of criteria: the oval shape of the impression, the use of Egyptian iconography or inscriptions and the availability of parallels in the known corpus of scarab-shaped seals.

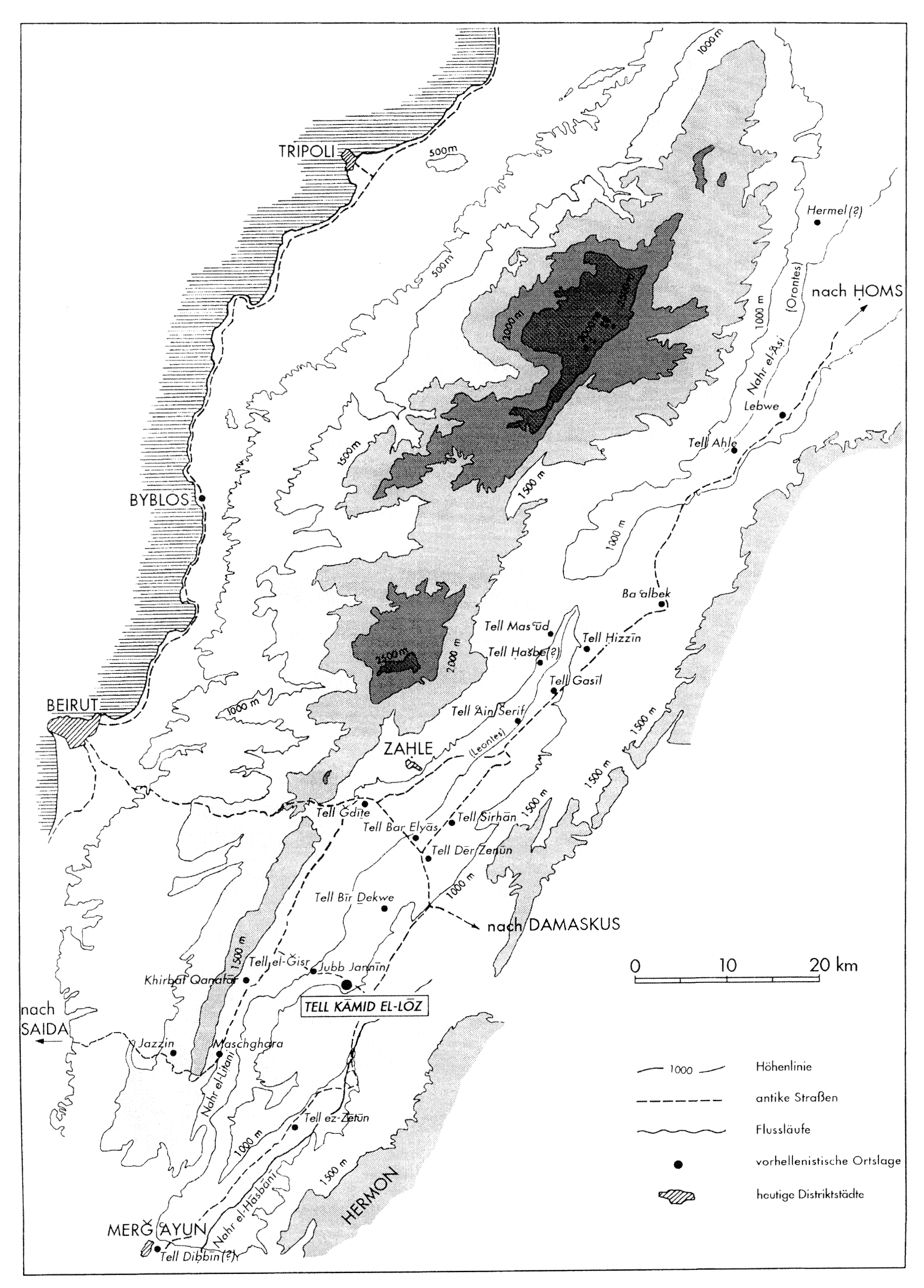


Fig. 1. Reconstruction of the network of trade routes running through the Biqāʿa Valley (Penner 2006: Abb. 1).

Bauperioden	Bauschichten bzw. Bauzustände und Schichtenverbände ohne Baureste	Tempel	Paläste	*Epochengliederung*
1	1 2 3			*Ältere Eisenzeit (Iron Age I)*
2	4 5 6			
3	7 8 8/9			
4	9 10	T1	P1 P2	*Spätbronzezeit (Late Bronze Age I-II B)*
5	11a 11b 11c 11/12 12a 12b 13a 13b 13c 13/14	T2a T2b T2c T3a T3b T3c T3d	P3 P4 P5	
6	14 15 16 16/17	T4	nicht erreicht	*Jüngere Mittelbronzezeit (Middle Bronze Age II B)*
7	17 18 19	nicht erreicht		
8	20 21 22			*Ältere Mittelbronzezeit (Middle Bronze Age II A)*
	a b c d			*Chalkolithikum bis Frühe Mittelbronzezeit (Chalcolithic - Middle Bronze Age I)*

Fig. 2. Stratigraphy of Kāmid al-Lōz (Kühne / Salje 1996: 15).

relations of the Bronze Age. The following catalogue presents the information that is essential for this discussion.[6]

[6] A more elaborate catalogue will be published elsewhere, together with other finds from Lebanon. The descriptions of the archaeological contexts are taken from the excavation reports or have been kindly provided by the excavators. The hieroglyphic codes refer to Gardiner's sign-list (1957).

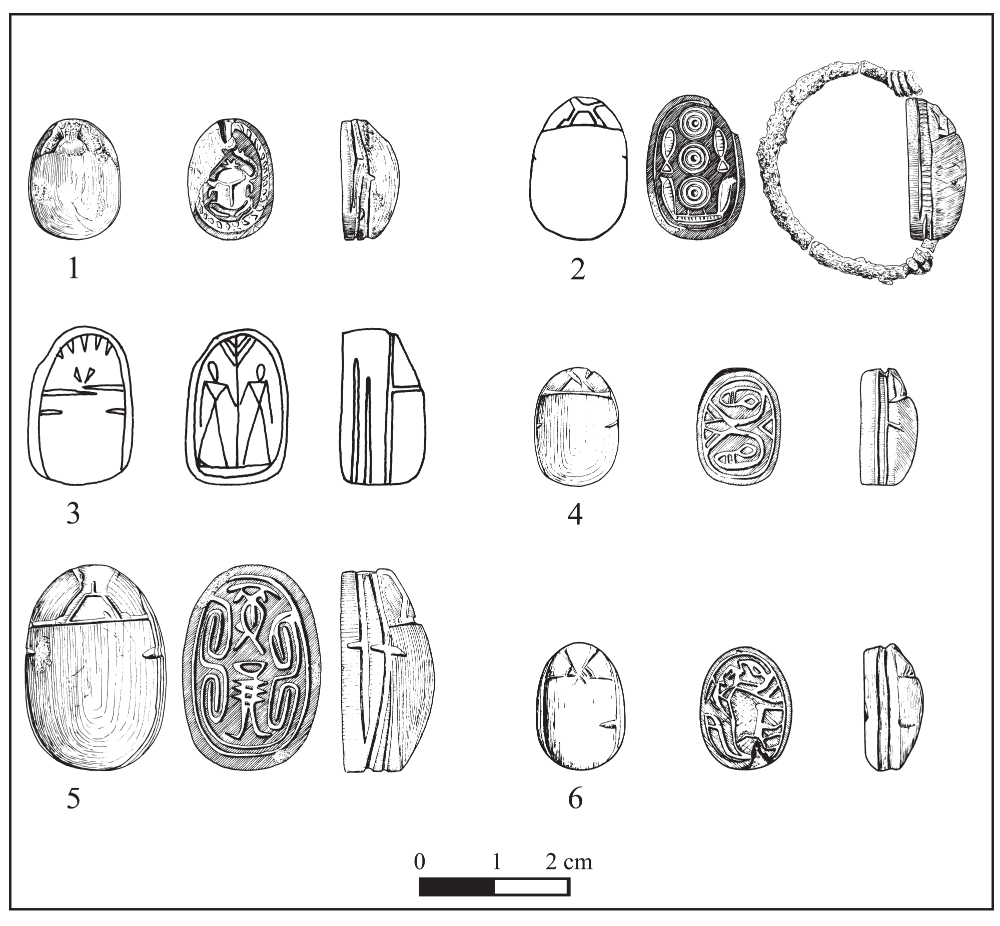


Fig. 3. Cat. no. 1 (KL72:270; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 23 no. 76); Cat. no. 2 (KL70:12; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 26 no. 85; drawing of back by the author); Cat. no. 3 (KL99:43; images courtesy of M. Heinz); Cat. no. 4 (KL67:239; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 27 no. 88); Cat. no. 5 (KL67:225; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 26 no. 84); Cat. no. 6 (KL64:385; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 23 no. 77).

1. Scarab KL72:270
Material and dimensions: Steatite, traces of blue glaze. 16 × 12 × 8 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square E15 (north of the Temple Area), upper part of a street filling (level 14) dated to the very end of the MB.
Date and origin: Canaanite, early MB IIB (ca. 1700–1650), as suggested by the typological features (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 72–73) and by the design of a beetle with sun disk inside a rope border (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 51, nos. 60–61). This scarab is therefore slightly older than its context.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 134–135, no. 76, Abb. 23, Taf. 18.

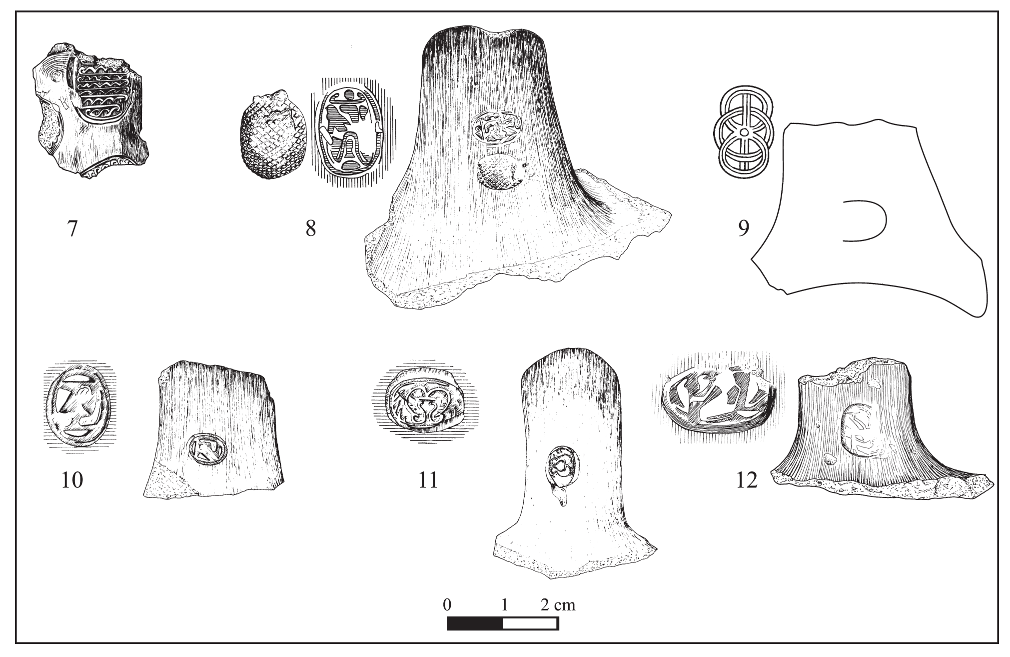


Fig. 4. Cat. no. 7 (KL72:188; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 36 no. 107); Cat. no. 8 (KL72:243; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 31 no. 97); Cat. no. 9 (l/I-f-13/2002; images courtesy of M. Heinz); Cat. no. 10 (KL74:609; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 33 no. 100); Cat. no. 11 (KL74:610; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 33 no. 102); Cat. no. 12 (KL80:102; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 33 no. 101).

2. Scarab KL70:12
Material and dimensions: Steatite. 19 × 12.5 × 7 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square J13, associated with a context belonging to level 10 or 9 (ca. 1180–1150).
Date and origin: Canaanite, early MB IIB (ca. 1700–1650), as indicated by parallels for its design consisting of circles between uraei and *sꜣ* (V17) or *ḥm* (U36) hieroglyphs (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 58, no. 48, pl. 59, no. 5) and by the typological features (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 67, no. 12, pl. 68, nos. 6–7, 9, 14, 16). It therefore represents a MB 'heirloom' in a LB context.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 142–143 no. 85, Abb. 26, Taf. 21.

3. Scarab KL99:43
Material and dimensions: Green jasper. 21.5 × 14 × 11.5 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square F16, northeast of the temple, feature 34, sounding with MB II–LB II material (Heinz et al. 2001: 34–36).
Date and origin: Canaanite MB II, Green Jasper Group (ca. 1700/1650–1500), as indicated by the design of two figures on either side of a sacred tree (e.g. Keel 1997: 730–731, no. 113, 774–775, no. 43), by the style of engraving and by the material (cf. Keel 1989). It could be contemporaneous with its context or, more likely, represent an 'heirloom'.

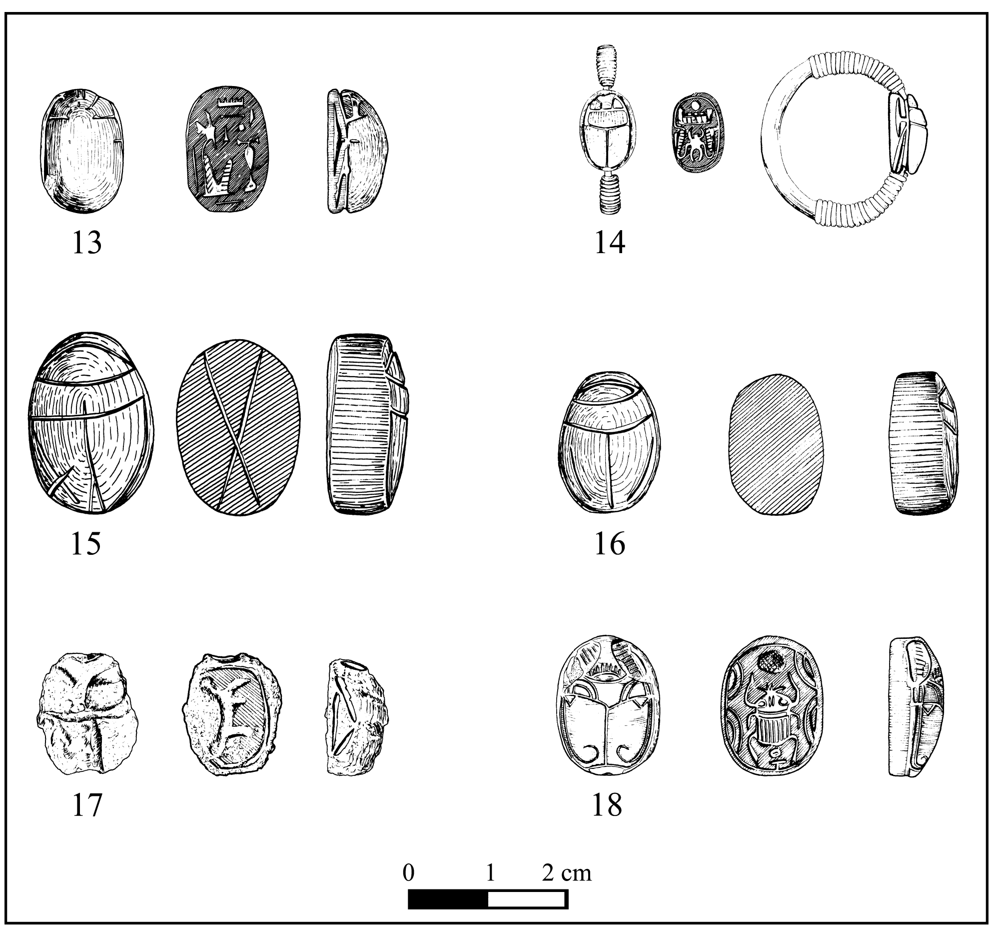


Fig. 5. Cat. no. 13 (KL72:300; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 24 no. 81); Cat. no. 14 (KL78:511; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 22 no. 74); Cat. no. 15 (KL78:510; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 30 no. 96); Cat. no. 16 (KL78:509; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 30 no. 95); Cat. no. 17 (KL77:123; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 24 no. 79); Cat. no. 18 (KL70:16; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 27 no. 86).

Selected bibliography: Unpublished (context information and images courtesy of Marlies Heinz).

4. Scarab KL67:239
Material and dimensions: Steatite. 16 × 11 × 8 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square E15, north of fortification wall of level 15 (MB IIB).
Date and origin: Canaanite, late MB IIB–IIC (ca. 1650–1500), as indicated by the typological features (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 106–107) and therefore contemporaneous with its context. Parallels for the lotus flower design, however, date also from other periods (e.g. Keel 1997: 70–71, no. 143; Ward 1978: pl. VII, nos. 186–188).
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 145–146, no. 88, Abb. 27, Taf. 21.

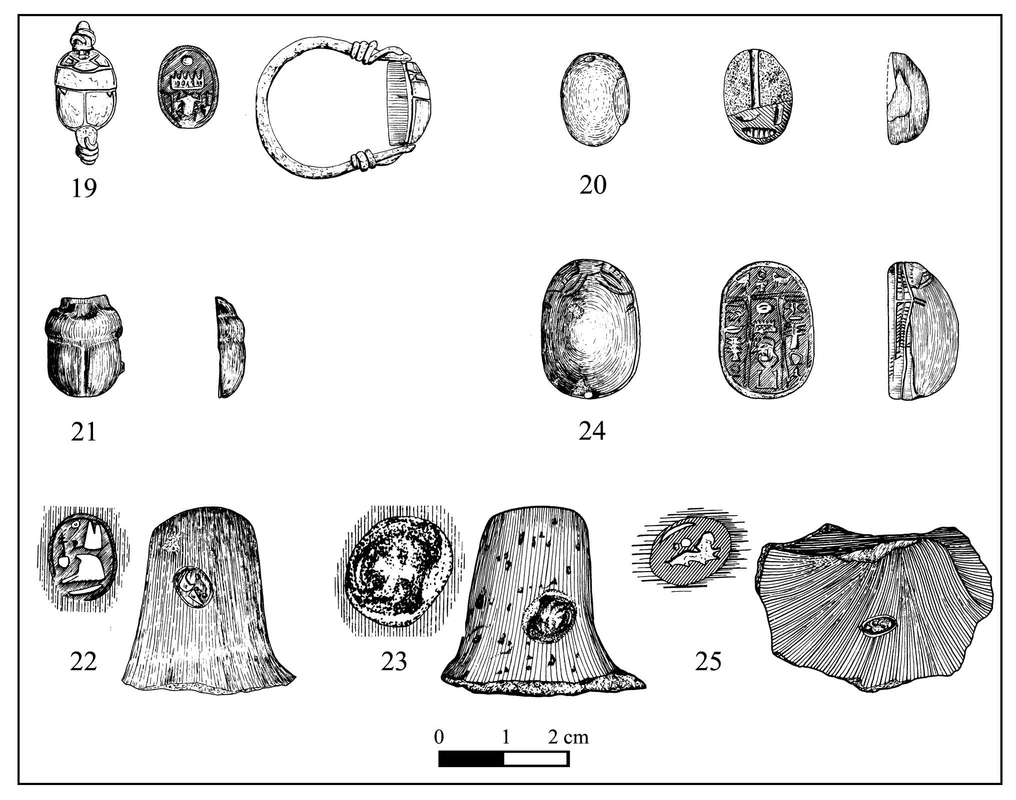


Fig. 6. Cat. no. 19 (KL64:554; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 22 no. 73); Cat. no. 20 (KL77:77; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 29 no. 94); Cat. no. 21 (KL70:621; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 28 no. 93); Cat. no. 22 (KL74:611; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 32 no. 99); Cat. no. 23 (KL79:1; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 32 no. 98); Cat. no. 24 (KL70:87; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 22 no. 75); Cat. no. 25 (KL78:260; Kühne / Salje 1996: Abb. 34 no. 104).

5. Scarab KL67:225
Material and dimensions: Steatite. 26 × 18 × 11 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square F13, tomb of level 13/14 (MB II–LB I), together with LB I pottery.
Date and origin: Canaanite, late MB IIB–IIC (ca. 1650–1500), as indicated by the design representing the signs *wꜣḥ* (V29), *nb* (V30) and *ḏd* (R11) in a scroll border (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 92, nos. 5–6, 11–12) and by the typological features (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 107, no. 5). This scarab is either a late MB 'heirloom' in an early LB context or, more likely, contemporaneous with it.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 141–142, no. 84, Abb. 26, Taf. 20.

6. Scarab KL64:385
Material and dimensions: Steatite. 17 × 12 × 8 mm.
Archaeological context: Area III, square A14, west of the LB 'citadel walls' on the western side of the palace, together with Greco-Roman and Byzantine pottery.
Date and origin: Canaanite, late MB IIB–IIC (ca. 1650–1500), as indicated by the

design with marching lion (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 101, nos. 3–8) and by the typological features (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 106, nos. 22, 26, pl. 107, nos. 1, 3, 14). This scarab is an MB 'heirloom' found in a later context.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 135, no. 77, Abb. 23, Taf. 19.

7. Impression of a scarab on jar stopper KL72:188
Material and dimensions: Clay. Approximately 11 × 12 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square D16, level 0/1, not associated with any structure, found together with material belonging to level 13/14 (transition MB II–LB I, ca. 1550).
Date and origin: Probably Egyptian, late Middle Kingdom (late 12th–13th Dynasty, ca. 1850–1650), as suggested by the design of interlocking spirals (e.g. Gratien 2001: fig. 2, nos. 6B-58, 6B-81; Keel 1997: 304–305, no. 593) and therefore an impression made by an 'heirloom'.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 162, no. 107, Abb. 36, Taf. 27.

8. Impression of the base and back of a scarab on jar handle KL72:243
Material and dimensions: Clay. 17 × 12 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square C16, level 1 (immediately above late MB level 21), not associated with any structure, found together with shards that are probably to be associated with levels 17–20 (MB II).
Date and origin: Canaanite, early MB IIB (ca. 1700–1650), as indicated by the hawk with *nṯr*-sign design (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: 17, 126–127, pl. 52, nos. 1, 7, 10, 13–14, 22, 30) and the typological features (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 67, nos. 4–7, 11, pl. 70, nos. 11–14). It may be contemporaneous with the support on which it was impressed.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 154, no. 97, Abb. 31, Taf. 23.

9. Impression of a scarab on jar handle 1/I-f-13/2002
Material and dimensions: Clay. Approximately 17 × 11 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square F13, filling of main street 11 (findspot 608), together with MB II–LB I pottery.
Date and origin: Canaanite, late MB IIB–IIC (ca. 1650–1500), as suggested by parallels for this design of convoluted coils (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 88, nos. 10, 33, 34) and therefore likely to be contemporaneous with the support on which it was impressed.
Selected bibliography: Unpublished (context information and images courtesy of Marlies Heinz).

10. Impression of a scarab on jar handle KL74:609
Material and dimensions: Clay. 15 × 12 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square J16, room Q of the 'Treasury', palace building level P4c(–b) (LB I–IIA, ca. 1480–1350).
Date and origin: Possibly Canaanite, late MB IIB–IIC (ca. 1650–1500), as suggested by parallels for this design with L-shaped red crown (S3) between *nb*-baskets (V30) (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 51, no. 2, pl. 79, nos. 1, 5, 7–8; Keel 1997: 362–363, no. 758, 488–489, no. 1128). This impression was made by an 'heirloom'.

Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 156–157, no. 100, Abb. 33, Taf. 24; Penner 2006: Abb. 106, no. 4.

11. Impression of a scarab on jar handle KL74:610
Material and dimensions: Clay. 14 × 11 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square H14, south of the temple, associated with palace building levels P2–P4 (LB I–IIB, ca. 1480–1150).
Date and origin: Canaanite, late MB IIB–IIC (ca. 1650–1500), as suggested by the Hathor-head design (e.g. Ben-Tor 2007: pl. 106, nos. 3–5; Schroer 1989: nos. 81, 92, Abb. 0102). This impression was made by an 'heirloom'.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 158, no. 102, Abb. 33, Taf. 24.

12. Impression of a scarab on jar handle KL80:102
Material and dimensions: Clay. 21 × 12 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square F15, levels 11/12, north of the temple, associated with temple of level T2c (end LB, ca. 1200–1160).
Date and origin: Canaanite, late MB IIB–IIC (ca. 1650–1500), as suggested by the design representing a kneeling falcon-headed figure holding a uraeus (e.g. Keel 1997: 314–315, no. 625). This impression was made by an 'heirloom'.
Bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 157–158, no. 101, Abb. 33, Taf. 24.

13. Scarab KL72:300
Material and dimensions: Composite material (faience or unglazed paste), white. 16 × 11 × 7 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square J15, in the entrance hall of the level P4 palace (LB I–IIA, ca. 1480–1350).
Date and origin: Egyptian, New Kingdom (mid-18th Dynasty), as indicated by the design, consisting of the inscription *ḥs nb Jmn Rʿ* (W14-V30-M17-Y5-N35-N5-Z1) 'praise the lord Amun Ra' accompanying a seated figure of the sun god wearing the two-feathers crown (*šwty*) (e.g. Keel 1997: 264–265, no. 479). This scarab is contemporaneous with its context.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 138–139, no. 81, Abb. 24, Taf. 20.

14. Scarab KL78:511
Material and dimensions: Steatite (?). 10 × 6.5 × 5.5 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square J17, room T of the 'Treasury' of the level P4d palace (LB I–IIA, ca. 1480–1350).
Date and origin: Egyptian, New Kingdom (mid-18th Dynasty), as indicated by its inscription bearing the throne name of Thutmosis III *Mn-Ḫpr-Rʿ* (Y5-L1-N5) (e.g. Jaeger 1982: nos. 221, 224, 337–345, 460). This scarab is contemporaneous with its context and most likely dates from his reign.
Selected bibliography: Adler 1994: Taf. 15,1; Heinz 2009: 315, fig. 4a; Kühne / Salje 1996: 132–133, no. 74, Abb. 22, Taf. 18; Miron 1990: 97–98, no. 421, Taf. 30.

15. Scarab KL78: 510
Material and dimensions: Cornelian. 21.5 × 15.5 × 10 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square J17, room S of the 'Treasury', palace building level P4d (LB I–IIA, ca. 1480–1350) together with Cat. no. 16.
Date and origin: Egyptian, New Kingdom (mid-18th Dynasty), as indicated by the X-shaped design, the material and the design parallels (cf. Boschloos 2012a). This scarab is contemporaneous with its context.
Selected bibliography: Adler 1994: 85, Abb. 12; Boschloos 2012a: fig. 2, no. 3; Kühne / Salje 1996: 151, no. 96, Abb. 30, Taf. 22; Miron 1990: 98, no. 422, fig. 29, no. 2.

16. Scarab KL78:509
Material and dimensions: Cornelian. 17 × 12 × 8 mm.
Archaeological context: Found with Cat. no. 15.
Date and origin: Egyptian, New Kingdom (mid-18th Dynasty), based on the similarities in material and typological features between this scarab and Cat. no. 15; contemporaneous with its context.
Selected bibliography: Adler 1994: 85, Abb. 12; Kühne / Salje 1996: 150, no. 95, Abb. 30, Taf. 22; Miron 1990: 98, no. 423, fig. 29, no. 1.

17. Scarab KL77:123
Material and dimensions: Bronze. 15 × 12 × 7.5 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square J17, found among the stones of wall 28 of the 'Treasury' of the P4a palace (LB I–IIA, ca. 1480–1350).
Date and origin: Probably Egyptian, New Kingdom (early to mid-18th Dynasty, as suggested by the context). On the base is a quadruped, marching to the right. Bronze is very rarely used for the production of scarabs, and most examples date from the New Kingdom (Keel 1995: § 355).[7] This scarab is contemporaneous with its context.
Selected bibliography: Adler 1994: 153, no. 809, Abb. 19, Taf. 15,3; Kühne / Salje 1996: 136–137, no. 79, Abb. 24, Taf. 19.

18. Scarab KL70:16
Material and dimensions: Steatite. 17 × 12.5 × 6.5 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square D14, not associated with any structure, together with MB II and LB pottery shards.

[7] Keel (1995: §355) assigned this scarab to the so-called Post-Ramesside production of the early Iron Age (ca. 1070–900), based on an identification of the animal as a lion, a very popular motif on such seals (cf. Keel 1990: 337–367; Keel / Mazar 2009: 64*–65*; Münger 2005). However, corrosion does not allow for an identification of the animal; the motif of the striding lion is not exclusive to the aforementioned mass-production (e.g. Ben-Tor / Keel 2012: 92, figs. 6, 22–24; Keel 1997: 674–675, no. 33 and parallels cited there); the scarab does not seem to represent an intrusion from more recent contexts (Kühne / Salje 1996: 137); and the mass-produced scarabs are otherwise made exclusively of steatite or composite material (Keel 1990: 361–362).

Date and origin: Egyptian, New Kingdom (18th Dynasty), as indicated by the highly decorated back (e.g. Tufnell 1958, vol. 2: pl. 32, no. 127) and the design consisting of a beetle with sun disk above the sign of life *ʿnḫ* (S34) (e.g. Giveon 1985: 114–115, no. 11), which is reminiscent of late MB designs. This scarab could be contemporaneous with its context.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 143–144, no. 86, Abb. 27, Taf. 21.

19. Scarab KL64:554
Material and dimensions: Steatite. 13 × 7 × 5 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square G13, on the floor of room H of the temple of level T1 (transition LB–Iron Age, ca. 1160–1140).
Date and origin: Egyptian, New Kingdom (mid-18th Dynasty, almost certainly reign of Thutmosis III), as indicated by the presence of the throne name of Thutmosis III (*Mn-Ḫpr-Rʿ*) between the signs *nṯr* (R8) and *nfr* (F35), meaning 'the perfect god' (e.g. Jaeger 1993: nos. 13, 72, 73; Keel 1997: 518–519, no. 1223). This scarab is an 'heirloom' in its context.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 131–132, no. 73, Abb. 22, Taf. 18; Metzger 1993: 348, no. 1201, Taf. 65, no. 4.

20. Fragmentary scarab KL77:77
Material and dimensions: Composite material, unglazed yellowish paste. 14 × 10 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square J17, under wall debris of the palace of level P2(–P3), levels 9–11 (transition LB–Iron Age, ca. 1200–1140).
Date and origin: Canaanite LB I–IIA, Beth Shean Level IX Group (ca. 1480–1350), as suggested by the typological features, the material and design parallels (e.g. Ben-Tor / Keel 2012: figs. 17, 27). This scarab is an 'heirloom' in its context.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 149–150, no. 94, Abb. 29, Taf. 22.

21. Back of scarab KL70:621
Material and dimensions: Composite material, unglazed white paste. 15 × 12 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square G14, court G of the temple of level T2bc (transition LB–Iron Age, ca. 1200–1160).
Date and origin: Undetermined due to its fragmentary state. Probably New Kingdom Egyptian import.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 149, no. 93, Abb. 28, Taf. 22; Metzger 1993: 299, no. 909, Taf. 64, no. 3.

22. Impression of a scarab on jar handle KL74:611
Material and dimensions: Clay. 13 × 10 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square J16, room Q of the 'Treasury' of level P4d–c palace (LB I–IIA, ca. 1480–1350).
Date and origin: Egyptian, New Kingdom (18th Dynasty), as indicated by the design consisting of the falcon head of the god Montu and the hieroglyph *nfr* (F35) 'perfect, good' (e.g. Keel 1997: 188–189, no. 253; 242–243, no. 414; Keel 2010: 256–257,

no. 536). The impression was made by a scarab contemporary with the support on which it was impressed.
Selected bibliography: Adler 1994: Taf. 15, no. 4; Kühne / Salje 1996: 155–156, no. 99, Abb. 32, Taf. 23; Miron 1990: 149, no. 705, Taf. 85, no. 7; Penner 2006: Abb. 106, no. 5.

23. Impression of a scarab on jar handle KL79:1
Material and dimensions: Clay. 14 × 12 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square H15, found a few meters south of the temple, level associated with the level P4 palace (LB I–IIA, ca. 1480–1350).
Date and origin: Probably Egyptian, New Kingdom (18th Dynasty), as suggested by the design that seems to represent the sign of life *ʿnḫ* (S34) (e.g. Teeter 2003: nos. 177–190). The impression seems to have been made by a scarab contemporary with the support on which it was impressed.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 155, no. 98, Abb. 32, Taf. 23.

24. Scarab KL70:87
Material and dimensions: Steatite. 21 × 15 × 10 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square G13, under room L of the temple of level T1a (transition LB–Iron Age, ca. 1150).
Date and origin: Possibly Egyptian, Third Intermediate Period (22nd–25th Dynasty) intrusion, based on its typology (e.g. Keel 1997: 34–35, no. 35) and the composition with the throne name of Thutmosis III, *Mn-Ḫpr-Kȝ-Rc* in a shrine or palace (Jaeger 1982: § 1035–1041; Kühne / Salje 1996: 133–134, nos. 13–14).
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 133–134, no. 75, Abb. 22, Taf. 18; Metzger 1993: 356, no. 1241, Taf. 65, no. 2.

25. Impression of a scarab on jar handle KL78:260
Material and dimensions: Clay. 13 × 10 mm.
Archaeological context: Area I, square G16, under the red floor south of room M of the temple of level T1b (transition LB–Iron Age, ca. 1160–1140).
Date and origin: Undetermined. Unclear impression of a design that resembles a quadruped beneath a sun disk (N5). The impression was probably made by an 'heirloom', either from the MB or the earlier LB.
Selected bibliography: Kühne / Salje 1996: 159–160, no. 104, Abb. 34, Taf. 25; Metzger 1993: 329, no. 1090, Taf. 144, no. 9.

Commentary and Analysis

The Middle Bronze Age

The majority of Bronze Age remains from Kāmid al-Lōz date to the LB, when Kumidi enjoyed its most prosperous period. For the MB, three phases have been indentified: building periods 8 (MB IIA, levels 22–21) and 7–6 (MB IIB, levels 20–14) (Fig. 2). On the northern slope of the tell, 27 MB II burials were discovered, containing mainly infants and

children (Genz / Sader 2007–2008: 264–265; Hachmann 1982: 101–121). Structures on the western slope have been interpreted as houses (Hachmann 1989: 47–50, 52), but the excavations also revealed larger buildings: the oldest phases of the temple and the palace date to the MB IIB, as do a metal workshop at the eastern side of the palace (Adler / Penner 2001, vol. 1: 27; Heinz et al. 2001: 10; Metzger 1991: Taf. 17) and parts of a defensive wall (Kulemann-Ossen 2010: 152). These features indicate that Kāmid al-Lōz already functioned as an important centre in the Biqāʿa Valley at this time, inherent to its geographically favourable position on the commercial routes between the Lebanese coast, northern Palestine and western Syria.

Egyptian imports were found primarily in younger, LB layers, but there is nonetheless one item from an early 2nd millennium context that can be linked to the Egyptian Middle Kingdom;[8] the impression of a late Middle Kingdom scarab (**Cat. no. 7**) on a late MB II–early LB I handle represents, however, an 'heirloom' and thus does not reflect MB contacts with Egypt.

All other scarabs and scarab impressions in MB contexts (**Cat. nos. 1, 4, 5, 8, 9**) evince a non-Egyptian origin. Apart from **Cat. no. 1**, which is only slightly older than its archaeological context, these items are contemporaneous with their late MB II contexts.[9] They belong to the MB II Canaanite production (17th–16th centuries), imitating Middle Kingdom prototypes but incorporating purely Canaanite ideas and motifs (Ben-Tor 2007: 117–120, 155). The Canaanite scarabs (**Cat. nos. 1, 4, 5**) were in all probability imported from the southern Levant,[10] and this may also be the case for the recipients bearing scarab impressions (**Cat. nos. 8–9**). It is not unlikely that the Middle Kingdom scarab mentioned above (**Cat. no. 7**) arrived at Kumidi together with these Canaanite scarabs and seal impressions, and that it had already circulated in the Levant as an 'heirloom' when it was used to mark the jar stopper. Whether this and the other scarab impressions were made in Kumidi itself or in another Canaanite centre in the southern or central Levant remains a matter of speculation.

Thus, the three scarabs and three scarab impressions from MB contexts at Kāmid al-Lōz reflect intraregional contacts within the Levant rather than interregional relations between the Levant and Egypt. Their distribution pattern within the city (Fig. 7) shows a concentra-

[8] Although its Egyptian origin is not certain, a stone vessel bearing the inscription *ḥꜣty-ʿ Rʿ-Wsr*, 'the major Ra-Woser' (Lilyquist 1994: 217; Miron 1990: 91, no. 398, Taf. 24, no. 3), was associated with the MB phase of the palace (Adler / Penner 2001, vol. 1: 27, 343). However, as it was found in an LB context (the 'Treasury', cf. infra), it may have reached Kāmid al-Lōz at a later date and thus cannot be used as archaeological evidence for relations with Middle Kingdom Egypt.

[9] As demonstrated by Ben-Tor (2011: 30–32), production of Canaanite scarabs generally dated to the late MB IIB–IIC actually continues into the early LB. It is therefore likely that the items from contexts dated to the transitional MB II–LB I phase and to the early LB I are contemporaneous with their contexts.

[10] The geographical distribution of early Canaanite scarabs (end of MB IIA–early MB IIB) in Palestine (Keel 2004: 92) and their almost complete absence in contemporary Egypt (Ben-Tor 2007: 186) argue for a southern Levantine origin. The numbers that have surfaced in the northern Levant are much smaller than those in the south, supporting the hypothesis that the production was initiated in the southern Levant. On the other hand, there seems to have been a northern Levantine contribution to the production of Canaanite scarabs during the later part of the MB II (as shown in Boschloos 2011–2012).

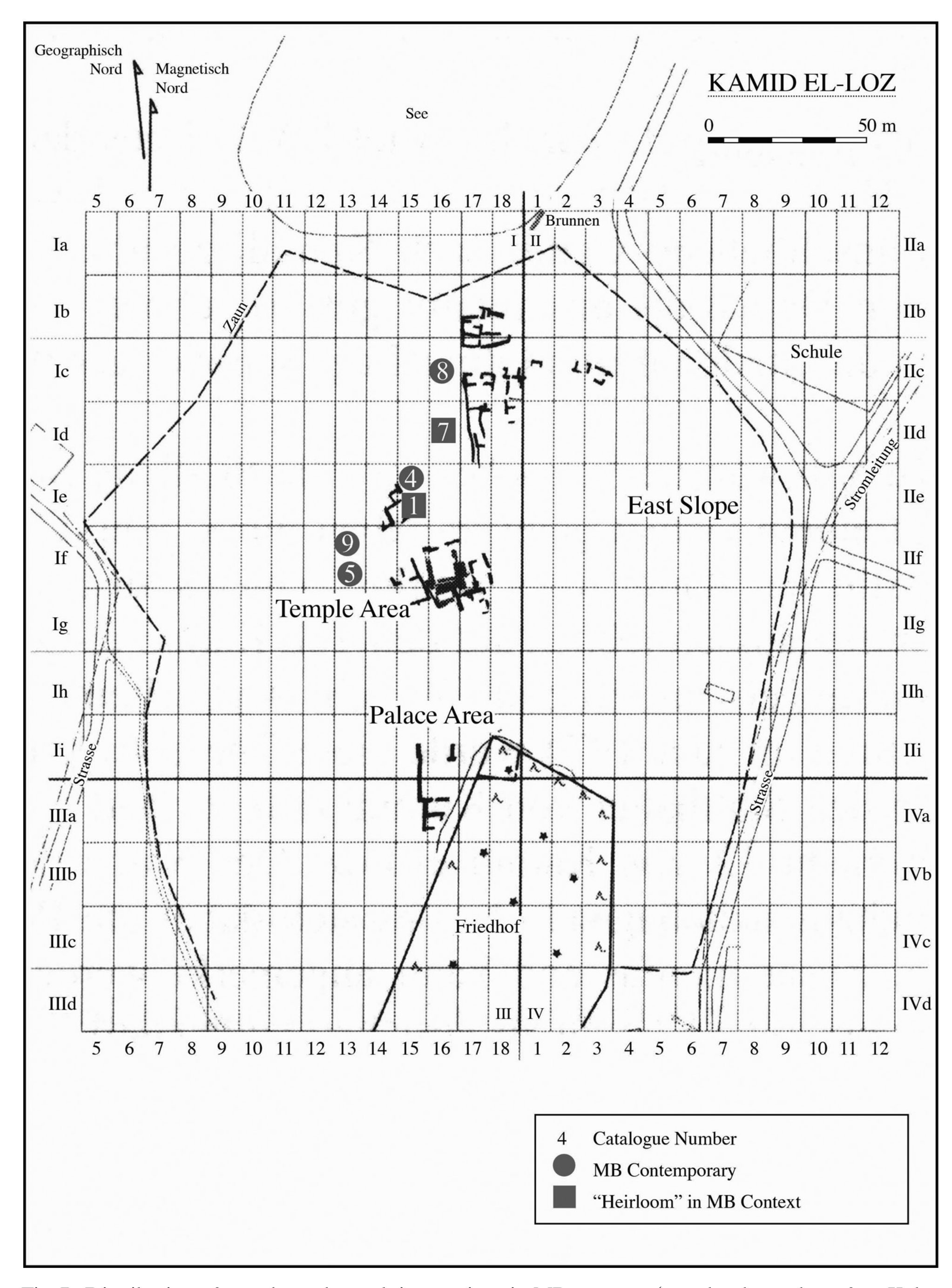


Fig. 7. Distribution of scarabs and scarab impressions in MB contexts (map by the author after: Kulemann-Ossen 2010: Abb. 49 / © Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities).

tion north and northwest of the temple, though admittedly, MB levels have not yet been reached in major parts of the city.

A second group of items are the MB scarabs and scarab impressions that surfaced as 'heirlooms' in LB contexts. They belong to the Canaanite production, mostly of the late MB IIB–MB IIC, and will be discussed below.

The Late Bronze Age

During the LB, the town developed into a flourishing city, with a palace, temple, workshops, fortification walls and residential quarters. Two LB building phases were distinguished: building periods 5 (LB I–II, levels 13–11) and 4 (transition LB II–Iron Age I, levels 10–9) (Fig. 2). Its ancient name, Kumidi, is known from the Amarna Letters (EA 116, 129, 132, 197, 198) and cuneiform tablets from the archives of Kumidi itself, as well as imported goods found at the site, bear witness to the city's economic growth. From the reign of Thutmosis III (ca. 1479–1425) onwards, Lebanon fell under Egyptian rule, and Kumidi functioned as the main seat of Egyptian administration in the province of Upi (or Abi / Apu / Upe). The local ruler (Akkadian: *ḫazannu*) was a vassal of the pharaoh until he was replaced by an Egyptian official (Akkadian: *rābu, rābiṣu*) during the reign of Amenhotep IV / Akhenaten (Pruzsinszky / Heinz 2008: 80–81).

Control over the Biqāʿa Valley was essential for Egypt, not only to secure the trade routes and the road to Syria, but also to strengthen the Egyptian political and military presence in the region. This allowed Egypt to create a buffer zone between it and the Mitanni and Hittite empires and to intervene rapidly in case of uprisings.[11]

During the Amarna Period, Egypt lost its northern provinces to the Hittites, but in the early 19th Dynasty, Seti I (ca. 1294–1279) and Ramesses II (ca. 1279–1213) brought Lebanon – if only briefly – back under Egyptian influence and political control. Helck (1986: 862) considers Kumidi to have remained the Egyptian administrative seat in Upi during the early 19th Dynasty and does not exclude that it may be identified as 'the city of Merenptah in the land of the Aramaeans'. However, although Seti I and Ramesses II set up stelae in the region (near Damascus, in Tyre, in Byblos and at the Nahr al-Kalb) (Lagarce 2010: fig. 6), no Ramesside inscriptions have been found at Kāmid al-Lōz, suggesting that Kumidi no longer functioned as an important Egyptian centre. It was probably Damascus that took over this role and that may be identified as the city of 'Ramesses-loved-by-Amun that is in Upi' (Lagarce 2010: 63–65). Following the reign of Merenptah (ca. 1213–1203), Egypt gradually lost control over its northern provinces, and by the early 20th Dynasty the Biqāʿa Valley was no longer under Egyptian influence (Adler / Penner 2001, vol. 1: 353).

This historical background, as well as Kumidi's role in an extensive trade network in the Near East, are reflected in the quantitative change in and diversity of imports. Whereas Syrian and Anatolian objects are rather rare at Kāmid al-Lōz and Mesopotamian items are entirely absent, imports from Cyprus, Greece, Palestine and Egypt are well represented.

11 For example, in EA 129 the vassal king of Byblos requests military support from the Egyptian official in Kumidi, against the threat posed by Amurru, which had overthrown the Egyptian official residing in its capital, Ṣumur (Moran 1992).

The political situation at Kumidi, where the Egyptian empire not only controlled and influenced the local economy but also determined the nature of foreign relations, offers an explanation for these findings (Heinz 2009: 320). This may also be true with regard to the building activities in the LB city, when the MB temple and palace were expanded; it has been suggested that the temple could only have been enlarged with the permission (or on the initiative) of the Egyptian overlord. This would have reinforced the claim to divine legitimation of Egyptian rule and secured the support of the local priestly class, which represented a secondary power base in the city, beside the ruler, who was already under Egyptian control (Heinz 2010: 90–91). Egyptian and Egyptian-style objects, reflecting Egyptian influence in the city, will be presented here per find context.

In its oldest and longest phase (Temple T3, ca. 1550–1200), the LB temple consisted of three large rooms with an annex in the southwest. The layout of these rooms remains practically unchanged throughout the LB, but the western part is enlarged until the temple reaches its largest extent, ca. 39 × 27 m, in its youngest phase (Temple T1, ca. 1150). Each of the three buildings of the respective LB phases was destroyed by fire (Metzger 1991: 217–219, Taf. 18–21).

Aegyptiaca from the temple include a fragmentary Egyptian statue (forecourt M, level T3), a bronze ring with cornelian cowroid (room A, level T3b–a), a fragmentary faience scarab (**Cat. no. 21**) (court G, level T2c–b), a faience plate decorated with a *tilapia nilotica* fish (room F, level T1) and two scarabs bearing the name of Thutmosis III (**Cat. no. 24**) (room L, level T1), including one mounted on a ring (**Cat. no. 19**) (room H, level T1) (Metzger 1993: nos. 19, 49, 909, 1151, 1201, 1241). An impression on a handle (**Cat. no. 25**) (south of forecourt M, level T1b) (Metzger 1993: no. 1090) also seems to have been made by an Egyptian scarab. An egyptianising cylinder seal dated to the LB surfaced in a 12th-century context (Kühne / Salje 1996: 38–39, no. 4). Unfortunately, the fragmentary scarab (**Cat. no. 21**) and the impression on the handle (**Cat. no. 25**) cannot be dated accurately and are likely to represent 'heirlooms' in their contexts, which date to the transitional LB II–Iron Age I period (early 12th century). Similarly, neither of the two scarabs bearing the throne name of Thutmosis III (**Cat. nos. 19 and 24**) are contemporaneous with their contexts: the first one probably dates from his reign and therefore represents an 'heirloom' that is almost three centuries older than its context, whereas the second one is considered an Iron Age intrusion based on the object's typology. It thus seems that, of all the objects enumerated above, only the cornelian cowroid can be dated to the same period as its context (contemporaneous with the mid-18th Dynasty), and this because a cowroid displaying the same shape and proportions has been attributed to the reign of Thutmosis III (Jaeger 1982: 139, no. 499), making a mid-18th Dynasty origin very likely.[12]

The situation is similar in sectors adjacent to the temple, where 'heirlooms' predominate. North of the temple lay courtyards, workshops and other buildings (Hachmann 1989: 56–57). These LB contexts yielded a late MB II green jasper scarab (**Cat. no. 3**) and a handle impressed with a late MB II scarab (**Cat. no. 12**). A handle bearing a double car-

[12] The proportions were miscalculated by Kühne and Salje (1996: 118): the dimensions of this cowroid are 14 × 8 × 5 mm, yielding proportions of 1.75 : 1 (length/width), which are characteristic for the MB II–LB I, i.e. Second Intermediate Period–mid-18th Dynasty (Keel 1995: § 186).

touche of Seti I, *Mn-M3ʿt-Rʿ Sth̠y-Mr-N-Ptḥ* (Kühne / Salje 1996: 160–161, no. 105), was found in a level contemporaneous with the mid-18th to 19th Dynasties (level 12, ca. 1480–1200) and may have been deposited during or shortly after his reign. Furthermore, two egyptianising cylinder seals surfaced in contexts west of the temple. The first, depicting the Canaanite god Baʿal smiting a large cobra with his spear, and thus referring to the myth of Baʿal slaying the snake Apophis, was found in an MB II context (Kühne / Salje 1996: 41–41, no. 6). Based on similarities with LB rather than with MB parallels (cf. Cornelius 1994: 212, 222, figs. 49a–52, nos. BM74–84), it appears to represent an intrusion from a younger LB layer. The other cylinder seal depicts the god Seth, a volute tree and two figures on either side of a standard. Reminiscent of Mitanni glyptic, it dates to the LB but is older than its 12th-century context (Kühne / Salje 1996: 40–41, no. 5).[13]

It thus seems that the majority of *aegyptiaca* found in and near the main temple of the city, except for the cornelian cowroid and the handle bearing the cartouche of Seti I, may be interpreted as 'heirlooms'.

The LB palace is located at the centre of the tell and is oriented to the north, towards the temple. It developed throughout five successive building levels (Fig. 2), P5 (contemporaneous with Temple T3d–c, ca. 1550–1480) to P1 (contemporaneous with Temple T1, ca. 1550), of which levels P4c and P4a were destroyed by fire. After a number of fires in levels P2/1, the palace was abandoned, and only parts of it were reused in the Iron Age (Adler / Penner 2001, vol. 1: 349–350). No palace archives have yet been discovered, and they probably lie under the modern cemetery that covers the south-eastern part of the building. The entire complex measures more than 3500 m^2 in level P4, but its surface recedes from level P3 onwards. The palace consists of rooms around a central court (Z) and includes, in level P4, a Royal Tomb (referred to also as 'Treasury') and a Royal Workshop that continues the metallurgic activities initiated in the MB (cf. supra). Staircases indicate the presence of at least one upper floor (Adler / Penner 2001, vol. 1: 348).

Imported goods from the palace mainly represent Mycenaean and Cypriot pottery (e.g. Adler / Penner 2001, vol. 2: Taf. 67, 76, 84, no. 8, 93, 102–106). Surprisingly, only two scarabs have been found in the palace itself (**Cat. nos. 13 and 20**). The first surfaced in the entrance hall of the palace, and as it represents a mid-18th-Dynasty import it is contemporaneous with its context (level P4). The second is a southern Levantine import from Beth Shean, contemporaneous with the mid-18th-Dynasty and thus an 'heirloom' in its context, which is dated to levels 11–9 (ca. 1180–1140), i.e. contemporaneous with the early 20th Dynasty. They by no means represent prestigious items, and except for the finds in the Royal Tomb, Egyptian and egyptianising items in the palace are scarce.

Kāmid al-Lōz is one of the few sites in the Biqāʿa Valley where LB burials are attested. Although the LB necropolis was probably located *extra muros* (Hachmann 1986: 31–32), excavations east of the palace revealed a building that served as a funerary structure, called the 'Treasury' (*Schatzhaus*) after the many rich objects it contained. The connection to the

13 Representations of the Egyptian god Seth are rare on Levantine cylinder seals, but mention should be made of two cylinder seals of Addumu and his son Annipi 'of Sidon', depicting Seth, Reshef and Horus (Caubet 2007: 249–250). They surfaced in the antiquities market of Sidon. I thank Eric Gubel for pointing out this connection between Sidon and Kāmid al-Lōz.

palace and the nature of the grave goods indicate that it was used for the interment of members of the ruling family. It consists of four rooms (Q, R/U, S and T), and similar constructions were unearthed in the palaces of Megiddo and Alalakh. Stratigraphically, the Royal Tomb belongs to the palace's building level P4 (ca. 1480–1350), but its oldest phase may date back to level P5 (Adler 1994: 126–143). The burial gifts – most of which were found in rooms S and T – include ivory artefacts (gaming boards, duck-shaped pyxides, figurines, etc.), bronze vessels and weapons, gold jewellery, vessels in bronze, stone, faience and glass, a late Minoan Ib jug and Cypriot Base Ring I–II and White Slip II wares (Miron 1990). Based on parallels from Egypt and the Levant, the small finds have been dated to the 15th–early 14th centuries or to the early to mid-18th-Dynasty (ca. 1550–1390), i.e. prior to the reign of Amenhotep III (Lilyquist 1994: 207–220). A study of the local pottery assemblage revealed that the structure had a funerary function during its older phases (P4d–c), after which it became more profane (phases P4b–a) (Adler 1994: 138–139; Penner 2006: 365–374, 402–403). Finally, a stone bowl, probably dating back to the Old Kingdom but later inscribed with the name Ra-Woser, should be mentioned among the *aegyptiaca* from the *Schatzhaus*. It has been suggested that Ra-Woser would have been one of the individuals who were buried here (Adler 1994: 143; Lilyquist 1994: 217), but this remains highly hypothetical given the archaeological context and the uncertain origin of the vessel (cf. footnote 8). The scarabs from the 'Treasury' all represent Egyptian imports contemporaneous with their mid-18th-Dynasty contexts (**Cat. nos. 14–17**). They are made of precious materials such as bronze and cornelian, some bearing a royal name. Two LB handles with scarab impressions were also found in the Royal Tomb. The first bears the impression of a contemporary 18th-Dynasty scarab, but it cannot be determined whether it was impressed locally, in another Levantine centre or in Egypt. The second handle (**Cat. no. 10**) bears an MB design, so the scarab would have been an 'heirloom' when it was used to make the impression, i.e. around the mid-18th-Dynasty. Except for the bronze scarab (**Cat. no. 17**), the scarabs and the scarab impressions from the 'Treasury' were found in layers associated with the oldest phase of the structure (levels P4d–c), when its primary function was funerary. Given the fact that the excavators found the bronze scarab in a later context ('*tertiäre Lage*') of level P4a, it is possible that it was also originally deposited during the older phase.

Some scarabs and impressions were discovered outside the temple and the palace. An 18th-Dynasty scarab that surfaced in an LB context 30 m north of the temple (**Cat. no. 18**) may be another contemporary LB find. It was located at some distance from the temple and does not seem to be associated with any structure. In the sector between the palace and the temple, LB contexts yielded an MB scarab on a bronze ring (**Cat. no. 2**) as well as two handles (**Cat. nos. 11 and 23**). The first handle bears the impression of a MB 'heirloom', while the other seems to represent an LB design. Unfortunately, the impression is very shallow. All of these finds were found in contexts not directly related to the monumental buildings, but given the short distance between the temple and the palace (i.e. less than 20 m), it is not surprising that these objects surfaced in the proximity of the other Egyptian and egyptianising seals. While it must be pointed out again that a large part of the site remains to be excavated, the distribution of the *aegyptiaca* allows drawing some preliminary conclusions.

The reduced dimensions of the palace from level P3 onwards and the desacralization of the Royal Tomb suggest that Kumidi was at the peak of its development in the 15th and early 14th centuries (palace building level P4 / temple building levels T3b–a), when it was vassal to Egypt. The distribution pattern of scarabs and impressions in LB contexts (Fig. 8) offers some additional insights into social and economic dynamics within the city.[14]

Contemporaneous scarabs and impressions were concentrated in the palace area, particularly inside the Royal Tomb. This means that their presence on the site was strongly tied to the ruling elite and the political heart of the city. Heinz interprets the large concentration of precious objects in the 'Treasury' as personal property of the members of the ruling elite, either the local royal family or the Egyptian officials that exercised political control over Kumidi. These imports may have arrived at the city through the diplomatic exchange of gifts and thus mainly served to reward and encourage loyalty, but at the same time to strengthen the social status of the recipient. The imports found in the palace itself and on the eastern slope, mostly Mycenaean and Cypriot pottery, are of a different nature: they served as transport containers or were imported as consumer goods and arrived in the city by means of trade (Heinz 2009: 318). In any case, the diversity of imported goods in the palace area demonstrates the important role the palace played in the city's external relations.

LB scarabs that already represent 'heirlooms' in their LB contexts can be found both in the palace and in the temple. The temple, on the other hand, is the sector where most LB handles impressed with MB scarabs or MB 'heirlooms' have surfaced. The finds from the temple represent a mixture of consumer goods and objects that either functioned in cultic activities or were offered to the gods (Heinz 2009: 318). The fact that the *aegyptiaca* in the temple area represent almost exclusively 'heirlooms' suggests that the acquisition of imports in the temple focussed on the symbolic and material value of the object ('exotic' nature, use of precious materials) and not its Egyptian content and meaning (inscriptions, original function), in which case one would expect religious iconography and inscriptions dedicated to deities. Instead of being deposited at the time of their manufacture, most Egyptian and Egyptian-style items discovered in the temple area had remained in use as valuable objects and functioned as precious gifts to the gods (e.g. the scarab of Thutmosis III, **Cat. no. 19**). The presence of consumer goods in the temple (including the impressed jar handle with the name of Seti I and **Cat. no. 25**) does not exclude that some of these imports accompanied goods destined for consumption. The situation in the temple therefore contrasts with that in the palace area, where Egyptian imports surfaced in larger numbers, are of a different nature and are mostly contemporary.

[14] Not indicated on the distribution map are Cat. nos. 18, 21 and 24, due to uncertainties in the dating of the objects or their contexts, as well as Cat. no. 6, a Bronze Age scarab that surfaced in a context dated to Late Antiquity.

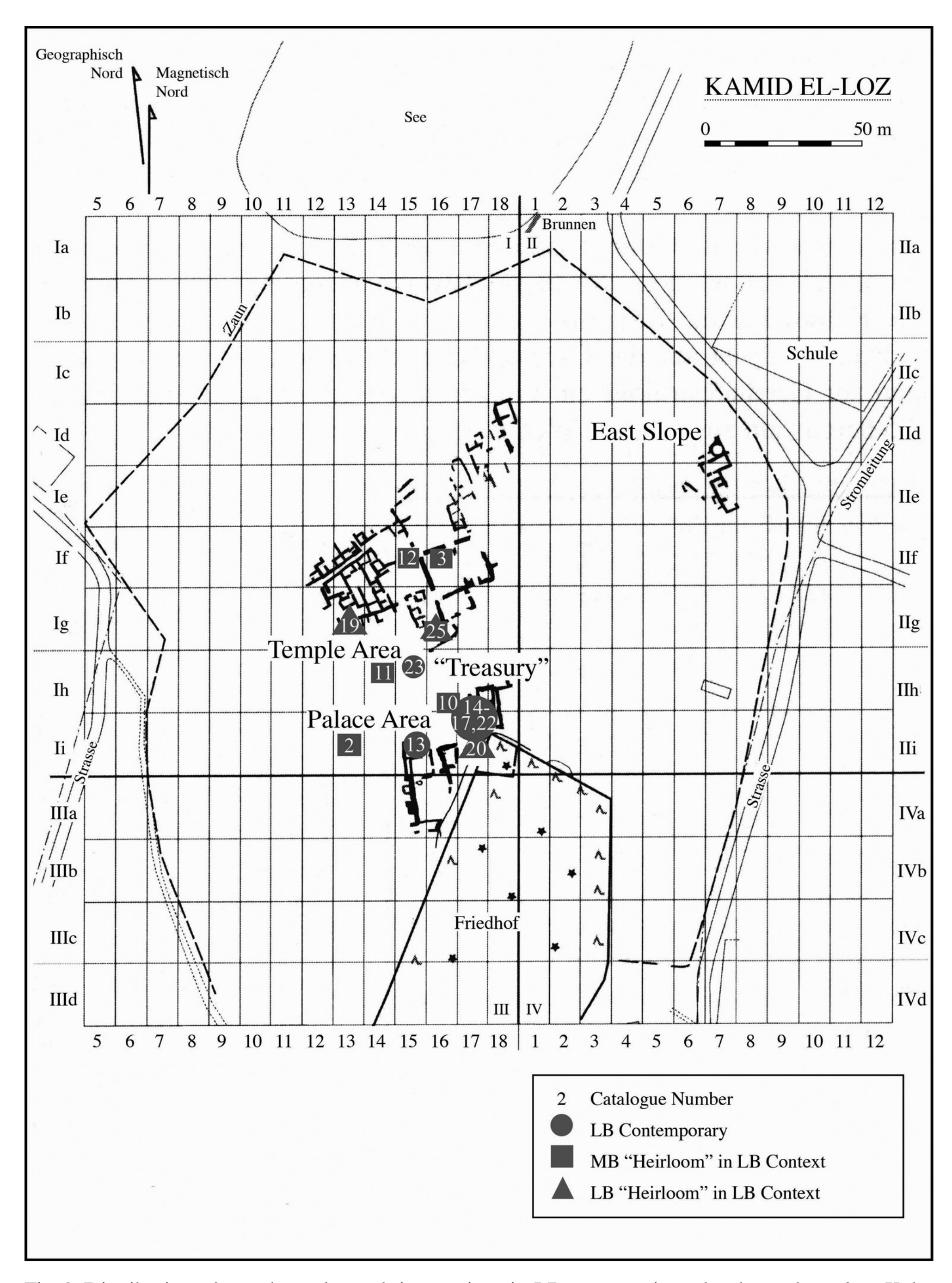


Fig. 8. Distribution of scarabs and scarab impressions in LB contexts (map by the author after: Kulemann-Ossen 2010: Abb. 50 / © Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities).

Final Remarks and Conclusion

Kumidi was part of a network of land routes connecting Egypt (via Palestine) with Anatolia and northern Mesopotamia (via Syria). This position not only created ideal circumstances for the acquisition of a diversity of foreign goods, but also fuelled the local elite's desire to obtain luxury items through these contacts, in order to confirm and reinforce their social status and political power. When Kumidi's advantageous location proved important for the expanding Egyptian empire and thus became an Egyptian administration centre in the Biqāʿa Valley, the influx of *aegyptiaca* increased accordingly. The routes by which these imports reached the city most likely came from the south (from northern Palestine) and the west (from Sidon, possibly even Beirut) (cf. Fig. 1). It remains unclear whether they arrived as diplomatic gifts, as merchandise or as personal property of Levantine merchants or Egyptians who passed through the region or settled in Kumidi, and indeed, it may well have been different for each individual object and cannot always be reconstructed. Their distribution throughout the city, however, demonstrates how they were received.

Imports – whether Egyptian, Cypriot or Mycenaean – surfaced in and near the temple, the palace (especially in the Royal Tomb or 'Treasury') and the residential area on the eastern slope. This pattern reflects a variety of user groups and functions: political, religious, administrative, funerary and domestic. The fact that imports were distributed beyond the temple and palace areas may indicate that the acquisition of foreign goods was not restricted to the elite (Heinz 2008: 114–115). This is also discernable in the distribution pattern of seal impressions on handles or on jar stoppers, items that reflect the city's economy and trading activities. They were found all over the city but mostly outside the temple and the palace (Kühne / Salje 1996: 162).[15] This is not surprising, were it not for the fact that the impressions were made almost exclusively by scarab-shaped seals, not by cylinder seals or local stamp seals. The practice of stamping jar handles remained limited to the southern Levant (Ben-Tor 2011: 26; Ben-Tor 2007: 45, no. 158, 186–187, 189), and their relatively large number at Kāmid al-Lōz[16] is yet another confirmation of Heinz's (2009: 320) conclusion that the city's commercial contacts were mainly with the South and the West.

The distribution of *aegyptiaca* at Bronze Age Kāmid al-Lōz, on the other hand, seems to have been limited to the centre of the city (palace and temple areas), suggesting that this type of foreign object was not available to the general populace, although, again, future excavations on the eastern slope may alter this situation. The strong connection between the palace and the temple is also noticeable in similarities between the finds from the Royal Tomb and those from room F of the temple (Metzger 1993: 98). An archaeological (as opposed to a purely iconographical or typological) approach and an assessment of the circulation of scarabs *contemporary* with their findspots and impressions underline the im-

[15] Except for the stamped jar handles Cat. nos. 10, 22 and 25 that were found inside the temple and in the Royal Tomb, bearing witness to the presence of consumer goods in these settings.

[16] Sealings and impressions made by scarab-shaped seals are rather uncommon in the central and northern Levant and mainly the result of trade relations with the south. The largest quantities surfaced at Kāmid al-Lōz (Boschloos 2011–2012).

portance of the palace in the acquisition and distribution of *aegyptiaca*. Egyptian and egyptianising seal-amulets were found mainly in non-religious settings, either as part of the personal property of the upper social classes or in administrative/economic contexts. 'Heirlooms', on the contrary, surfaced mainly in and near the temple and point to the value of these 'exotic' objects as gifts to the gods. This pattern may point to a 'hierarchy of power' (political vs. sacerdotal), in which Egyptian imports were firstly distributed among the ruling elite (discernable in the distribution of contemporary scarabs) and secondarily to the temple (as demonstrated by the 'heirlooms', but leaving open whether these were offered to the gods by the first group or the temple personnel). This difference between the palace and the temple is also visible in the distribution of cylinder seals with glyptic evidence; whereas both scarabs and cylinder seals surfaced in the temple, only a few cylinder seals were found in the palace (Kühne / Salje 1996: 163). This corresponds to the two institutions' divergent social backgrounds, in which the political elite seem to have preferred the rare and more prestigious Egyptian and egyptianising seals over the easily procurable Levantine and Mitanni cylinder seals.

The Egyptian presence in Kumidi during the mid-15th to 14th centuries was certainly the crucial factor for the increased influx of Egyptian and egyptianising objects, fuelling the demand of the local elite for 'exotic' status symbols and integrating the city into an international trade network. However, the circulation of foreign objects was not unique to the LB. The advantageous location on a crossroads of trade routes and the relations that Kumidi had already established with neighbouring regions during the MB, particularly with the southern Levant, had introduced the inhabitants to Egyptian-style items (such as Middle Kingdom and Canaanite scarabs) long before Egypt gained political control over the region.

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